

April 21, 2004

TO: Chief School Administrators  
Charter School Lead Persons

FROM: Richard C. Ten Eyck, Assistant Commissioner  
Division of Educational Programs and Assessment

SUBJECT: New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJ ASK) Grades 3 and 4  
Spanish Mathematics Pilot Tests

Under the provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, states are required to administer annual standards-based assessment to students in grades 3 through 8. These same provisions afford states the latitude to provide statewide assessments in a language other than English.

New Jersey's growing bilingual population has created an opportunity for the state to explore the possibility of providing its annual standards-based mathematics assessment in a Spanish version, in order to accommodate those students for whom Spanish is their first language. For these reasons, we are pilot-testing a Spanish language mathematics assessment in grades 3 and 4, as part of the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJ ASK) program, later this spring. Since Spanish is the second most commonly spoken language in New Jersey, we believe that this pilot will give us valuable information about the feasibility and validity of non-English state assessments. Potentially, a fully operational Spanish-language math assessment will give some students a fairer vehicle by which to demonstrate their mastery of the *Core Curriculum Content Standards*, thus providing a more precise measure of district and school performance in mathematics education.

Your district has been selected to participate in the grade 3 and grade 4 Spanish Mathematics Field Tests on May 20, 2004.

In our effort to ensure valid and reliable results from the pilot test, two groups of students, in each grade, will be tested. Group one (1) will consist of students who are currently in their third year of a language assistance program and students who have recently exited a language assistance program. Group two (2) will consist of students who are currently receiving instruction in a language assistance program and have been in the program for two years or less. It is necessary to randomly assign students to take either the English version or the Spanish version. Students taking the items in English should be randomly equivalent, based on ability, to students taking the items in Spanish. Thus, about half of the students in Group one (1) and Group two (2) will take the pilot test in English and the other half will take the pilot test in Spanish.

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For your reference, attached is a table outlining the groups as well as a description of a Bilingual Education Program and English as a Second Language (ESL) Program.

Please note that this is a pilot test only, and the department is making no commitment at this time to operational Spanish-language testing in the future. Should you have any questions regarding the pilot test, please feel free to contact Orlando Vadel, NJ ASK coordinator, at (609) 341-3456 or by e-mail at [orlando.vadel@doe.state.nj.us](mailto:orlando.vadel@doe.state.nj.us).

Best wishes for continued success as we work together for the best education for all of New Jersey's students.

RCT/BDR/OV/csa;grade3&grade4spanishmathematicspilottests  
Attachment

c: Members, State Board of Education  
Commissioner William L. Librera  
Dwight Pfennig  
Gloria Hancock  
Assistant Commissioners  
Kathryn Forsyth  
Michael Klavon  
Brian D. Robinson  
Timothy Peters  
Roseanne Harris  
Orlando Vadel  
Donald White  
County Superintendents  
County Test Coordinators  
District Test Coordinators  
Principals  
ESL/Bilingual Supervisors  
NJ LEE Group

Attachment:

Description of programs as defined by *New Jersey Administrative Code 6A:15*:

"Bilingual education program" means a full-time program of instruction in all those courses or subjects which a child is required by law or rule to receive, given in the native language of the limited English proficient students enrolled in the program and also in English; in the aural comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing of the native language of the limited English proficient students enrolled in the programs, and in the aural comprehension, speaking, reading and writing of English; and in the history and culture of the country, territory or geographic area which is the native land of the parents of limited English proficient students enrolled in the program, and in the history and culture of the United States. All students in bilingual education programs receive English as a second language instruction.

"English as a second language (ESL) program" means a daily developmental second language program of up to two periods of instruction based on student needs which teaches aural comprehension, speaking, reading and writing in English using second language teaching techniques, and incorporates the cultural aspects of the students' experiences in their ESL instruction.

Attachment:

Table of Groups

Grade 3 Groups	English (Grade 3)	Spanish (Grade 3)
Group 1 (LEP 3 or recently exited)	Group 1	Group 2
Group 2 (LEP 2 or less)	Group 1	Group 2

Grade 4 Groups	English (Grade 4)	Spanish (Grade 4)
Group 1 (LEP 3 or recently exited)	Group 1	Group 2
Group 2 (LEP 2 or less)	Group 1	Group 2